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NEWS

For Immediate Release

Ouachita's Ryan Lewis honored as guest artist during American Liszt Society Conference

By Phoebe Huff

November 26, 2018

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208



ARKADELPHIA, Ark.—Dr. Ryan Lewis, associate professor of percussion at Ouachita, recently was honored as a guest artist during the American Liszt Society Conference at Furman University in Greenville, S.C. Lewis, a 1999 Furman graduate, performed two rarely performed etudes alongside Ouachita graduate and pianist Tad Hardin.

While the American Liszt Society Conference mainly focuses on performing the works of Hungarian composer Franz Liszt, this year's conference also included a performance of a full-cycle of 12 piano etudes by 20th-century French Composer Maurice Ohana titled "Etudes d'interpretation." The conference showcased all 12 etudes performed consecutively, which had not been done before.

Furman University's Dr. Derek Parsons, Lewis' former instructor, coordinated the conference and invited Lewis to perform the final two etudes, both of which required a variety of percussion instruments.

"Number 11 featured metal percussion including vibraphone, crotales, suspended cymbals, Chinese cymbals, Thai gongs, tam tams, bell tree and almglocken (tuned Alpine cowbells)," Lewis said. "Number 12 featured membranophones such as tom toms, bongos, congas and snare drum, as well as woodblocks, tambourine and temple blocks.

"I played over 30 different percussion instruments, which the university was very kind to provide along with a rehearsal space," Lewis added.

Prior to the conference, Parsons provided rehearsal space for Lewis and Hardin, bringing back memories from Lewis' undergraduate years.

"[Parson's] old office, where I performed that proficiency test [in college], was the very office Tad and I rehearsed in while we were there for the conference," he said.

Lewis and Hardin have performed together since the early 2000s after meeting at Florida State University, where they were both pursuing their master's degrees.

On the same weekend of the conference, Lewis also taught a master class for Furman percussion students on free improvisation and the style of Nexus Percussion Group. Nexus was the first professional percussion ensemble and an inspiration for Lewis. Aside from being a unique way to conduct and practice music, Lewis said improvisation is also a great way for students to cultivate creativity in music.

"It is special to be a part of creating musical compositions in the moment that are temporal and will never, ever be heard again," Lewis said.

For more information, contact Dr. Ryan Lewis at lewisr@obu.edu or (870) 245-5421.

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